

Here is the secret about the sustainable growth rate formula. We talk about the fact, oh, it is so difficult to repeal because it costs so much. Guess what. That money that it supposedly costs is money that we have already spent. That is not money that is sitting in an earning account in some Federal T-bond somewhere. It is money we have already spent. It went out the door in 2001. We paid it out in 2005. Doctors were reimbursed that money in 2007. We just never accounted for it on the books. We sound like AIG.

This is nuts. We have got to stop this. End the SGR formula. Be up front about it. If the Congressional Budget Office needs to be instructed through legislation to do directed scoring to wipe that debt off the books, and then going forward we play this game straight with our country's physicians, then that is what we have to do. I intend to be introducing a bill; I have done so every Congress that I have been here, and I intend to introduce a bill that will do just that, and I will be back on the floor to talk more about that when that time comes.

We will hear some talk about mandates. When you hear the talk about the public option and mandates, you have got to ask yourself, what are we trying to do here?

Now, with mandates you tell everyone that you have got to buy insurance. We either do it as an individual mandate or an employer mandate. Well, employers look at that as a tax that you are going to put on jobs for health insurance. And if we put a tax on jobs while we are trying to recover from a recession and we want jobs to be created and we are going to tax them, so the small business community will come to us and tell us: Don't put a tax on jobs with an employer mandate in health insurance.

Now, an individual mandate says that everyone out there has the responsibility to have an insurance policy. The trouble with individual mandates is people don't always take them seriously. Look at the IRS, a pretty serious mandate, a pretty serious penalty if you don't comply. And what is our compliance rate with the IRS? About 85 percent. What is our compliance rate with voluntary health insurance right now? It is about 85 percent. So you don't get a lot of bang for your buck by putting in mandates.

Now, mandates are great for insurance companies, because everyone has to have insurance so they like that. Everyone is going to buy their product. Yea, we all make money. Put a public option plan on the table, and then the insurance companies are not so happy because now that mandate may be satisfied by a public option. But now we are forcing our insurance companies to compete with insurance that we are putting on the table at the Federal Government. It is hard to compete with the Federal Government. We can write a check for any amount of money. We never go broke, we never

run out of money, we just simply print more money when we need it. Well, the large health insurers in this country don't have that option. It is very, very difficult for them to compete with a government option or a government-run plan because they don't have the option of just simply printing more money when the time requires it.

So we do have to be careful with how we institute, if that is the direction we are going to go. And certainly all through the campaign I heard President Candidate Obama say that, surely if you like what you have got, you are going to be able to keep it. Well, that is true, unless we run them all out of business, in which case it will be hard for you to keep what you have got in your employer-sponsored insurance, and the only option will be a public.

Now, there are lots of moving parts to this debate. We are going to be back here frequently over the next several months. We are in the budgetary cycle now. As I understand, late in the night in the Budget Committee, the House Budget Committee, the House-passed budget did contain so-called language for reconciliation, which means that over on the Senate side they will only need 50 votes to pass whatever they want to pass.

The way forward is set for almost any change the Democratic majority and the Democratic President want to make in health insurance. I hope they are going to make the right decisions. I take the President at his word that he wants to learn from what works. I think we have talked about some of those things this evening, what we have seen working as far as State plans are concerned, what we have seen working as far as the affordability concept in the consumer directed plans. Certainly we need to learn from what works as far as connectors, because we have a State, Massachusetts, that is currently using a connector, and we need to see what the effect has been on the cost and availability of insurance; and, are people in fact conforming with the individual mandate that the State of Massachusetts has imposed?

If we look at all of these things in aggregate, we may not always make the right decision, but we will come closer to making that right decision than if we all just sit in a windowless room, as we all want to do here in the United States Congress. We love to do that down. We sit in a little windowless room down in the basement of the Capitol, we all talk about the things that matter to us. We never listen to anyone else's ideas. And is it any wonder that everything always looks the same when it comes out of the United States Congress?

Let's do things differently this time. Let's listen to each other. Let's take the President at his word. Let's practice evidence-based policy, let's figure out what works, and then let's get on with it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. BERKLEY (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. REYES (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of official business in the district.

Mr. WESTMORELAND (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today, March 31 and April 1 on account of illness.

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of medical reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHERMAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. LEE of California, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. BURTON of Indiana) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, April 3.

Mr. POE of Texas, for 5 minutes, April 3.

Mr. JONES, for 5 minutes, April 3.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes, today and March 31.

Mr. FLAKE, for 5 minutes, April 1, 2 and 3.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas, for 5 minutes, March 31, April 1 and 2.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker.

H.R. 146. An act to designate certain land as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System, to authorize certain programs and activities in the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture, and for other purposes.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House reports that on March 24, 2009 she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 1512. To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.